

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3240

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the "Reservists Education Protection Act of 2001".

**SEC. 2. RESTORATION OF CERTAIN EDUCATION BENEFITS OF INDIVIDUALS BEING ORDERED TO ACTIVE DUTY AS PART OF OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—Sections 3013(f)(2)(A), 3231(a)(5)(B)(i), and 3511(a)(2)(B)(i) of title 38, United States Code, are each amended by striking "in connection with the Persian Gulf War, to serve on active duty under section 672 (a), (d), or (g), 673, 673b, or 688 of title 10;" and inserting "to serve on active duty under section 688, 12301(a), 12301(d), 12301(g), 12302, or 12304 of title 10;"

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Sections 3013(f)(2)(B) and 3231(a)(5)(B)(ii) of such title are each amended by striking "in connection with such War."

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on September 11, 2001.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EVANS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I strongly encourage Members to support H.R. 3240, the Reservist Education Protection Act of 2001, and am pleased that the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EVANS) has joined me in sponsoring this. We are up to 34 Members who have cosponsored this important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, as many as 10,000 of the 50,000 Reservists and Guard members the President called to active duty on September 18, 2001, may have had their education interrupted by their selfless service to our Nation. These service members should not lose any of the educational benefits they have earned because they answered the call to duty. The Reservist Education Protection Act of 2001 would reinstate VA educational entitlement to those called up for Operation Enduring Freedom, as well as those called up in future national emergencies.

This bipartisan legislation would allow any service member who is mobilized after September 11 and had to disenroll from college or other schools to regain any monthly VA educational entitlement payments lost due to the call-up. Our bill accomplishes this by increasing the number of months of VA education entitlement equal to the months deducted for the incomplete course. These men and women would also regain time to attend school by extending the 10 years that they already have to use their benefit by a pe-

riod equal to the period of active duty for which they were called up, plus 4 months. For example, if a service member is mobilized for 6 months, he or she would have 10 months added to his or her 10-year delimiting period.

Mr. Speaker, in 1991, during the Persian Gulf War, Congress addressed this same issue and protected VA educational entitlements under both the chapter 30 Montgomery GI bill active duty program and the then-chapter 106 program for members of the Selected Reserve. Such protections were for the Persian Gulf War only.

I would note that the service members using the current chapter 1606 Montgomery GI bill program under title 10, U.S. Code, are already protected.

Let us tell the men and women mobilized that Congress stands with them as they serve our Nation during Operation Enduring Freedom. I urge support of H.R. 3240.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support the measure before us and salute the chairman, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Qualifying veterans, members of the Guard and Reserve and service members serving on active duty are eligible for veterans' educational benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Those eligible for VA education benefits are entitled to receive a specified number of monthly payments to further their education.

During a period of conflict, active duty servicemen and Reservists may need to leave school before an academic term has been completed in order to perform military service in the Nation's defense. Although these men and women have used a part of their VA education benefits to begin a term of study, they are unable to complete their academic work. Unfortunately, under current law, the entitlement these men and women have used is not restored for their future use even though their studies have been interrupted to serve this Nation.

During the Gulf War, Congress addressed this issue to protect the education benefits of our men and women in uniform. Chapter 30 in title 38, as well as chapter 1606 in title 10, were amended to provide for reinstating a veteran student's entitlement to provide for reinstating a veteran student's entitlement to education benefits if the courses in which he was enrolled were interrupted for active duty service.

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This applied equally to chapter 1606 and chapter 30 beneficiaries and, importantly, the reinstated benefits had to be "in connection with the Persian

Gulf War." In 1999, Congress amended this law by deleting the limiting language for chapter 1606. Because of this deletion, current chapter 1606 beneficiaries who discontinue school for active duty service will indeed have their entitlements reinstated.

Mr. Speaker, in the case of an individual who has been receiving educational benefits from the VA, but is prevented from completing his or her coursework as a result of changed military duties or because of activation, this bill would rightfully restore his or her entitlement that was being used for interrupted schooling. Thus, upon returning to school, H.R. 3240 would permit the individual to resume their educational pursuit with the amount of entitlement they possessed before entering the interrupted academic term.

The Nation devoted this past weekend to its solemn recognition of the brave men and women who have served this country. In the natural extension of this spirit and in the best interests of the future of the men and women in the Armed Forces, I strongly urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3240.

The name of the gentleman from New Jersey is strongly associated with this bill. I look forward to working with him in the implementation of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I thank the gentleman for his kind comments. We do work, I think, very well as a team on behalf of veterans.

**GENERAL LEAVE**

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material to the bill, H.R. 3240.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FORBES). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3240, the Reservists Education Protection Act of 2001, and I commend Chairman SMITH and Ranking Member EVANS for their leadership in introducing this bill today.

This bipartisan bill restores important Veterans Administration education benefits to those active duty, reserve and guard personnel who have been called up for Operation Enduring Freedom.

It has been estimated that up to 10,000 of the 50,000 reservists and guard members recently called up to active duty by President Bush as a result of the September 11th attacks on the United States will lose educational assistance benefits if they are forced to withdraw from school. Many of these men and women will also lose the tuition they have already paid for their education to date.

As a Vietnam Veteran, I know the value of educational benefits to military personnel returning from a war zone and trying to develop

their skills to get a decent job. As someone who has spent over 30 years in the U.S. Army Reserve, I also know that educational benefits are one of the most popular tools we use to retain and keep quality personnel in military. It is critically important that we preserve and protect the Montgomery GI Bill benefits that are offered to our service members.

Under the provisions of this legislation, those military personnel who are using their Montgomery GI Bill benefits and who are called up for Operation Enduring Freedom will have their monthly benefits restored.

Active duty service members, reservists, guard personnel and veterans enrolled in the Post-Vietnam Era Veterans' Educational Assistance Program, and the Survivors and Dependents Educational Assistance Program, will also be included within this legislation.

Service members will regain essential time to attend school by extending their Montgomery GI Bill date by the time of their mobilization tour of duty, plus four months, to the 10-year period of eligibility they already have. Congress provided similar relief during the War in the Gulf.

I urge my colleagues to support those patriotic service men and women who are responding to the call of duty at this challenging time. Preserve and protect their educational benefits while they are off fighting international terrorists who have viciously attacked our Nation. Pray that they get back safely and help them get back to school when they do return.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker and colleagues, I express my strong support for H.R. 3240, the Reservists Education Protection Act of 2001.

We are facing a situation in which many of the men and women, currently pursuing their education with VA educational benefits, may need to leave school before the academic term is completed when they are called to serve in the war against terrorism. As many as 8,000 to 10,000 of the reservists, now being called up, will have no reinstatement of their educational benefits for classes that were interrupted.

This legislation will restore their entitlement for benefits and allow them to complete their education which has been interrupted by our fight against terrorism.

We are in a new type of war, one which seeks to deter those who seemingly have no moral compass and who are willing to kill innocent civilians in great numbers. Now, more than ever, we need to support our brave soldiers who are putting their lives on hold to protect our nation, and indeed, to protect the world. As a co-sponsor of this bill, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3240!

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3240.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

#### FAST TRACK PROFITEERING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, on the evening of September 11, some gas stations in northeast Ohio and across the country raised the price of gas to \$4, \$5, even \$6 a gallon. Many people called that war profiteering.

Unfortunately over the last 9 weeks or so, something not much different has occurred here on Capitol Hill. You might call it political profiteering.

First, Congress passed a bailout bill giving the airline industry \$15 billion in cash and loan guarantees with virtually no strings attached: no sacrifices for the airline executives, no assistance for the 100,000 unemployed airline workers, no money for any kind of airline safety.

Then 3 weeks ago, in the name of stimulating the economy, this Chamber passed new tax cuts and accelerated others for the richest people and companies in America. Again, very little was included in the plan for laid-off workers and those among us who needed assistance the most.

Then a couple of weeks ago, political profiteering reached new heights. That week, the Bush administration's trade representative, Bob Zoellick, sought to link the trade negotiating authority known as Fast Track to our Nation's antiterrorism efforts. He went further by claiming that those of us who oppose Fast Track are a bit indifferent to terrorism and perhaps unpatriotic. According to Mr. Zoellick, free trade is the way to combat terrorism around the world; and if you do not support it, then you do not support real American values.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, Fast Track and free trade do not embody American values as well as our trade representative has indicated. In Qatar, where this week's World Trade Organization ministerial is being held, the people do not have freedom of speech, they do not have freedom of assembly, they do not have freedom of religion, freedom of association, and they do not have free elections. Qatar's human rights record may not be in line with American values, but it is familiar territory to many of corporate America's trading partners.

Supporters of Fast Track say interaction with the developing world spreads democracy, but as we engage developing countries in trade and investment, democratic countries are losing ground to dictatorships and to

authoritarian developing countries. Democratic India is less desirable for Western investors than authoritarian China. Democratic Taiwan is losing out to autocratic Indonesia. In 1989, 57 percent of developing country exports in the manufacturing sector came from democracies. Since then, exports from democracies fell to 22 percent. Fully 65 percent of developing country exports come from totalitarian/authoritarian nations. The fact is Western investors want to go to places like China and Indonesia, which are dictatorships, because they have pliable work forces, they have authoritarian governments, and they are very predictable for Western businesses. Western corporations want to invest in countries that have poor or nonexistent environmental standards, that have below poverty wages, that have no worker benefits, that have no opportunities to bargain collectively.

As American investment moves to those dictatorships where they do not have the values that we have, American working families lose out. Our trade agreements go to great lengths to protect investors and protect property rights; but they do nothing to protect workers in this country or in developing countries, and they do little to protect the environment.

Mr. Zoellick's call for an absolute trade negotiating authority in the name of patriotism must be recognized for what it is, pure and simple political profiteering. We have all watched with pride the indomitable spirit of working Americans in response to the events of September 11. The right response for us to defend the jobs and values of these same Americans is a "no" vote on trade promotion authority.

#### AIRLINE SAFETY AND COAST GUARD PROFESSOR OF THE YEAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, yesterday's plane crash was another devastating blow to the residents of New York and the citizens of this great Nation. Although we do not know the cause yet, I have been hearing it called a "routine plane crash." I want to repeat that, a routine plane crash. God help us all if we ever accept a plane crash as routine.

I was in New York yesterday, and I had to take the train back to Washington. In fact, I chose to take the train back to Washington. I was talking to the train conductor who said that U.S. lawmakers have failed the American public. This is what our citizens think of this House and this Congress.

How many planes must go down before we truly deal with safety? Not just who screens the baggage but the safety